

Sample Outline

This silly example outline shows a lot of detail; you can decide how much you need in order to feel prepared and stay on track while keeping within time limits. Too little detail and you may feel underprepared; too much, and your audience may lose sight of your central message and three main points.

Title: While not always necessary, writing a title can help you succinctly capture the essence of your message.

→ You Can Be a PB&J Pro Too!

Identifies your purpose in the presentation. Options: to inform..., to explain..., to persuade...

Specific Purpose: To explain to my audience how to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

States your central message, around which the whole presentation revolves. It will actually be delivered at the end of your introduction, but is included here at the top because you should have it in mind from the very beginning, before you even write your introduction.

Thesis Statement: Making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich is not as hard as it seems, when you remember three important steps: set up your work space, gather materials, and make the sandwich.

Specifies how you will organize the main points of your presentation, i.e., why they appear in the order that they do. The organizational pattern helps your audience to follow you more easily.

Organizational Pattern: Chronological

Captures your audience's attention, conveys the purpose of your presentation, and lays out a "road map" for the remainder of your presentation.

→ Introduction

Wins your audience's attention and interest through a variety of methods. Options: statistic, story, reference to recent events, humor, complimenting your audience, request audience participation, thought-provoking question

→ I.

Attention Getter: Did you know that according to a 2009 report by the National Sandwich Institute, over 50,000 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are eaten every day?

Ensures that you clearly reference your general subject of discussion. In some cases this may already be accomplished by your attention getter.	▶ II.	Introduce Topic: Sadly, though, at least 60% of these sandwiches are made incorrectly. Today I want to make sure you don't become one of these sandwich accident statistics; I want to talk to you about effective PB&J making technique.
Explains why your audience needs to or should want to learn the content you will present.	▶ III.	Relevance: Because we all eat so many peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, it's important to be able to make a decent PB&J—effectively and efficiently.
Explains to the audience why you are qualified to speak on the subject.	▶ IV.	Credibility Statement: I am a certified Subway Sandwich Artist, have led more than 100 PB&J clinics, and estimate that I have personally eaten at least 2,000 PB&J sandwiches myself; I want to share this expertise and experience with you today.
States your central message, and your two to three main points that support, explain, or prove the thesis (your central message).	▶ V.	Thesis Statement & Preview of Main Points: Making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich is not as hard as it seems, when you remember three important steps: set up your work space, gather materials, and assemble the actual sandwich.
Clearly marks the end of the introduction and the beginning of the body of your presentation. Helps the audience transition from one to the other.	▶	Transition: Let's begin by examining the first step, arranging a suitable workspace.
Body		
This is Main Point I, which states clearly the intended message for this section of the body (like the thesis statement does for the whole presentation).	▶ I.	A well-arranged workspace enables you to work confidently and capably.
Each of the supporting points (A, B, C, etc.) explains, proves, or otherwise supports the main point it appears under. Similarly, each subpoint (1, 2, 3, etc.) explains, proves, or otherwise supports the supporting point it appears under. (And so on...)		A. First, locate a flat surface of at least two feet square. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This may seem like more than is necessary but when you get into the intensely physical stage of actually making the sandwich, you'll want every bit of it! 2. You will need to choose between the different benefits of a countertop versus a table. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A countertop provides a nice height for most sandwich makers. b. A table usually provides more room.

Note that this supporting point has less detail than the one above it (A). That's OK, as long as points are generally balanced.

Note how the transition looks back to what was just said and forward to what will next be said.

Note how this main point includes a preview of the supporting points that follow, helping the audience to follow the organization of the presentation.

- c. It's important that you choose what is right for you.
- B. Second, make sure that the entire space is clear of obstacles.

- 1. Obstacles in the workspace can lead to injury, frustration, and ruined sandwiches.
- 2. Common obstacles include salt and pepper shakers, dirty dishes, and half-empty water glasses.

► **Transition:** Now that you have a nice, big, clear work space, you'll need to gather the necessary materials for sandwich making.

- II. A complete array of materials ensures that you will have what you need when you need it, including a sanitary surface, food items, and a utensil.

- A. First, you will need a sanitary surface for making the sandwich on.
 - 1. A simple plate is the traditional choice.
 - 2. Others prefer a paper towel or piece of wax paper.
 - 3. My preference is for a cutting board.
- B. Second, you will need the food items: two pieces of bread, a jar of peanut butter, and a jar of jelly, jam, or preserves.
 - 1. Jelly has a homogenous gelatinous texture that tends to break up into globs.
 - a. If you want to pack a lot of fruit taste onto your sandwich jelly is the way to go, since it does not run, like jam.
 - b. On the other hand, jelly can be hard to spread evenly, resulting in "jelly pockets" unevenly distributed throughout the sandwich.
 - 2. Jam has a less gelatinous texture than jelly.
 - a. Jam spreads very evenly, but may not "stack up" the way jelly will.
 - b. Sometimes, jam has less sugar than jelly, which may be important if you are monitoring your sugar intake.
 - 3. Preserves represent something of a hybrid between jelly and jam.

Note how this transition does two things:
(1) It reminds us what the previous two main points explained, and (2) it helps us transition to the final main point.

- a. They include actual fruit, as jam does, and thus have a lumpy texture.
- b. But because they include more whole fruit than jam, they can “stack up” like jelly, allowing for more fruit flavor.
- c. Preserves tend to be the most expensive option of the three, however.
- C. Third and finally, you will need a butter knife.

Transition: With your workspace set up and your materials assembled, you are ready to begin making the sandwich.

- III. Proper method in making the sandwich will allow you a fun, successful sandwich-making experience.
 - A. First, lay out the two pieces of bread side-by-side on your assembly surface.
 - B. Second, open the jars of jam (or jelly or preserves) and peanut butter.
 - C. Third, taking the knife in hand, scoop out about a tablespoon of peanut butter.
 - 1. A good PB&J includes no less than one tablespoon of peanut butter.
 - 2. Beyond that, it is up to your personal preference exactly how much you would like to use.
 - D. Fourth, leaving the bread on the assembly surface, spread the peanut butter evenly across one piece of bread.
 - 1. Do not hold the bread in your hand while spreading, as your fingers may dig into the bread.
 - 2. Spread the peanut butter in a smooth back-and-forth motion.
 - 3. Wipe the knife clean on the second piece of bread to avoid peanut butter in the jam jar.
 - E. Fifth, repeat step four, this time with the jam.
 - 1. You *must* spread the jam on top of the peanut butter.
 - 2. This ensures that you will still have a second piece of bread to wipe the extra jam on when finished.
 - F. Sixth, place the second piece of bread on top of the first to complete the assembly process!

This transition clearly signals the end of the body and provides a segway to the conclusion.

► **Transition:** Now you know how to make a world-class peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Conclusion

Reminds your audience of your central message and two to three main points. It has been re-worded (compared to the original wording in the intro) to ensure it will have fresh impact.

► **Restatement of Thesis:** Indeed, making a professional-quality PB&J sandwich is easy when you follow three key steps: set up your work space, gather materials, and assemble the actual sandwich.

Performs the opposite function of the attention getter; it sends the listener out of the presentation—with some momentum. The clincher should be concise, strong, and well-delivered.

► **Clincher:** Now when you make a PB&J, you can do so with confidence that you will not be just another statistic of failed sandwich making. Enjoy!